

**Council On Aging  
Minutes of Board Meeting  
January 24, 2012 - Town Hall Clark Room**

The meeting was called to order by Liz Bishop at 10:39 AM. Board Members Present: Liz Bishop, Verna Gilbert, Elizabeth Acquaviva, Phyllis Goff, Abha Singhal, Jim Elgin, Jean Sain, Joanne Willens, Tom Dunkers, Lillian DeBenedictis, Helen Taylor. Associate Members Present: Sandy McIlhenny, Marje Stickler, Natalie Ives, Ted Read. Associate Members Absent: Nadine Bishop, Mary Daigle. Staff Members Present: Debi Siriani. Staff Members Not Present: Angela Smith, Peter Cullinane and Bonnie Hansen. Friend's Representative Present: Ray Taylor. Guests Present: Bert Williams, Tim Goddard, Deborah Farrell.

Liz Bishop introduced Deborah Farrell, the applicant selected by the Hiring Committee for the Transportation Coordinator open position. Verna Gilbert then read a letter to be presented to the Board of Selectmen explaining why Deborah was chosen over the other 15 candidates. Deborah briefly addressed the Board regarding her previous work experience and volunteerism with Carlisle COA at which point there was an opportunity for the Board to ask questions. Liz indicated that the next step was for the COA Board to vote on whether or not to approve the hiring of Deborah Farrell. A vote was then taken and it was unanimous; all 11 voting Board members approved. To officially extend an offer of employment, the Board of Selectmen will need to grant final approval at their next BOS meeting.

Tim Goddard, Town Administrator, was asked to discuss the roles of the COA Board and the COA Director. Tim explained that the COA Board derives its authority from the Board of Selectmen who appoints its members. The BOS also hires the COA Director. As Town Administrator, Tim is an extension of the BOS; basically representing the BOS on a day-to-day basis at Town Hall. The COA Director reports to the Town Administrator. The Town Administrator reviews his direct reports and receives input from the Chair of the COA Board to assist in his review of the COA Director. The COA Board provides policy direction and establishes a work plan for the COA in close consultation with the COA Director. How the work gets done is the purview of the Director. The Board determines the goals and the Director implements the goals. The Board sets the parameters of what the COA wants to accomplish. The Chair of the COA Board runs the Board, determining what actions are taken by the COA. The COA Board's job is to help set/review policies and objectives with the Director who in turn manages daily operations. If the Director's plan of implementing does not achieve the Board's goals, the Chair of the Board may communicate dissatisfaction. Tim pointed out that it is a balancing act and good communication is obviously key. He also stated that we are not only a Board, but also volunteers who get a lot of the work done.

Debi questioned whether the COA Board is an Advisory Board, which is how she understood the structure when she was hired, versus a Board of Directors. She is also concerned by the Action Item portion of the Board Meeting Minutes appearing to be a to-do list for her and her staff. It was discussed that the format of the COA Board Meeting Minutes was taken from a suggested format in the Town of Carlisle Committee Handbook. The list of action items assists the Board in determining if the goals of the Board are achieved and/or successful as well as allows the Board to move on to the next goal.

Liz asked for permission to let Bert Williams speak as a former COA Board Member. Bert conducted a study of 10 comparable COA Boards and he discovered that in seven of the ten towns they had dominant Boards. In Bert's opinion, the Board sets goals and priorities and evaluates performance. Tim concurred with Bert's opinion and agreed that a list of action items that are goals of the Board are fine as long as they do not tell how the item gets done. The Board agreed that the overall goal is to provide a service to the senior population. Liz ended the discussion by reading the policy and management guide once more which says the COA Board's job is to help set/review policy and objectives with the Director who in turn manages the daily operations.

**Transportation Report** – The report submitted by Bert Williams was accepted. Bert submitted a detailed activity report for the 20 days that he volunteered to be the Interim Transportation Coordinator. Bert indicated that he gave the drivers a written copy of their assignments each week so they felt the hours were equally distributed. He set up a new COA transportation email account ([COARide@aol.com](mailto:COARide@aol.com)) to assist with communicating transportation arrangements as well as telephoned seniors back the same day, if possible, to give them a status report. Bert offered his thoughts that the Transportation Coordinator should be clear on what our mission is for transporting seniors keeping in mind our limited resources as well as the associated expenses of transporting seniors. Bert discussed how the Recreation Department van was more economical and that he used it whenever no wheelchair transport was required. He indicated that, if we lose access to the Recreation Department van, we definitely will need another vehicle and it should be smaller than the COA van to ensure it is economical. He is willing to help with the transition of duties to the new Transportation Coordinator. Joanne Willens was thanked for her volunteer hours as an interim Transportation Coordinator as well during the vacancy.

**Secretary's Report** - The Minutes of the December 20, 2011 meeting as submitted by Elizabeth Acquaviva were accepted.

**Social Worker's Report** - The report submitted by Peter Cullinane was accepted

**Outreach Coordinator Report** – The report submitted by Angela Smith was accepted. Angela is seeking bakers for the February tea on February 16.

**Treasurer's Report** - The financial report for December submitted by Abha Singhal was accepted. Abha indicated that the numbers look very good for six months into the fiscal year.

**Friends of COA** – Ray Taylor indicated that the Friends are very pleased with the extra method of personal letters for seeking donations since they received positive results. He pointed out that they were augmented significantly this year by an earmarked donation by one specific couple that is not typical. In October, they began a policy decision of providing funds to the COA through a grant system where they select specific areas and dollar amounts for programs that they support and encourage pursuing. The Friends were unable to give the total amount voted before the end of the year because it wasn't clear that their donation position would be as good as it was. But, after the results came in including the specially earmarked grant, that they provided a second funding amount in the first week of January that hopefully will give the COA sufficient funds to carry out these activities in the COA's fiscal

year. The Friends did augment the amount devoted for fuel assistance since that is the earmarked special donation. Ray reminded the COA Board that he is stepping down as The Friends' Treasurer and that the Friends are in the process of making several changes. One change under review is the method by which they provide funds to the COA. In addition, the Friends are in the process of lining up their fiscal year, which is a calendar year, with the COA's fiscal year which is July 1 to June 30.

**Day Trips** - Joanne Willens gave an update on the many upcoming day trip offerings. They can be found in the COA newsletter, Senior Moments, as well as the Carlisle Mosquito. It was agreed to call the committee the Day Trip Committee versus Travel Committee going forward due to the confusion with the Transportation Coordinator job duties and title.

**Director's Report** – The November report as submitted by Debi Siriani was accepted. The December report as submitted by Debi Siriani was accepted. Debi would like a representative from the Board to attend CHNA Meetings (Community Health Needs Assessments) in Burlington if she is unable to go. There are approximately 10 meetings per year which are held in the afternoon. She would like to apply for a CHNA grant in the next year or so. However, you cannot apply for grants unless someone from the COA has attended at least 3 meetings in the year. The grant she would be looking for would be used for either a small vehicle for medical transport or to support health clinics. Abha feels a rep should be present at all meetings if we are to apply for a grant. Abha and Elizabeth offered to attend some of the meetings.

At this point, Liz made a motion to extend the meeting for an additional half hour and the motion was accepted.

The topic of the COA policy on whether or not a political figure could attend or be a featured guest at any of the scheduled COA socials or activities was discussed. It was agreed that a State or Local Representative should be booked at Town Hall for an hour instead of appearing at a COA coffee or activity thereby allowing seniors to determine which Representatives they would like to meet. These meetings would give the Representative an opportunity to discuss how they are advocating for seniors as well as allow seniors to ask questions and voice their opinions. While on this topic, Debi indicated that Brian Lynch, from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, and representatives from Senator Fargo's office would be at the Sleeper Room on February 6 to talk about the senior tax circuit breaker.

Debi wrote the Concord Carlisle Community Chest Grant request for \$4,000. It is less than what has been requested in the past. She was informed by CCCC that they will no longer support, if we asked again, funding for a newsletter formatter. Debi requested extra hours for our LISW. Also, as in the past, she requested funding for a stipend for the poetry facilitator for the intergenerational poetry with the middle school.

The Friends requested that Debi write an additional gift fund request for FY12 in the amount of \$4,000. Debi wrote a request for an increase of \$3,000 for fuel assistance and \$1,000 for Cultural Well-Being accounts. The reason for the additional grant is due to the earmarked donation for fuel assistance as well as the Friends' desire to support the senior poetry group. The additional gift fund request was approved.

The COA has been requested to attend tonight's Selectman meeting to present the long range plan especially as it pertains to our space needs request. Since we do not have a specific location to present

to the BOS tonight, there is no viable proposal to even go through. Liz asked the Board to discuss whether we want to put our time, passion, energy, and volunteer power in supporting space. We need to discuss what it is going to take for us to pursue this as one of the collective goals of the COA Board. Verna mentioned that we factor in utilities, personnel and maintenance when considering space. Debi highlighted a few reasons to start the conversation now. First, there is a lack of office space to house all the COA staff. Also, seniors who come in for social services and meet with the Outreach Coordinator for fuel assistance, food assistance or any other matter of a personal nature do not have space to hold a private conversation. Many times seniors cannot get to the podiatry clinic or luncheons due to limited access to parking and the hilly or icy street where they end up having to park and walk. Liz indicated that the town survey listed transportation, housing and tax relief as the top three issues with space being lower. However, as a long range plan, the exploration of options should start now in order for something to happen down the road. Liz asked for volunteers to form a committee, but no one at this point stepped forward. We need more substantial information. Liz invited members to the BOS meeting in the evening to represent the COA interest.

**Minuteman Senior Services** – Jean Sain and Phyllis Goff reported that MMSS has looked at relocating to properties on Crosby Drive as well as Hartwell Road. They are supposed to be out of their current space by June. MMSS made \$5,400 at the last auction, but they are not going to do any more since they do not have the support from Commonwealth Corps since they have been dismantled and it is too much work for their staff to do alone. MMSS is offering three free courses at Acton Medical all to be held on Wednesdays. Jean provided a handout describing the various courses and their dates. Legislative Advocacy will be starting up in February by gathering things we are interested in and need to be voted on. They usually send time sensitive information and Jean will electronically forward to Board.

**Transportation Policy** – Verna reported that the transportation policy is being updated and that the next meeting is scheduled for February 1.

**Compensation Review** – Abha reported that the Transportation Coordinator job description was presented to the Personnel Board and a request was made to increase the position's hours in fy13 from 19 hours to 25 hours. The Personnel Board will review the position description to make sure it is graded appropriately and get back shortly. The committee is now working on writing the Director Job Description and making it full time. The goal is to present at the Personnel Board's next meeting which is February 16.

Liz ended the meeting by indicating they would also be re-presenting at the next FinCom meeting which will be either 2/27 or 2/28.

Meeting Adjourned: 12:30 PM.

**Next Meeting: February 28, 2012 at 10:35 am at Town Hall-Clark Room.**

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Acquaviva